

*In this fictionalized account, Paul Revere's horse, Scheherazade, tells the story of her master, Paul Revere, working with Patriots to protest British taxes by preventing tea brought on English ships from being unloaded in Boston and other east coast ports.*

## Excerpt from *Mr. Revere and I*

by Robert Lawson

It was late one evening when we got back to Boston, but late though it was there seemed to be a great bustle of excitement in the streets. As we rode into the back yard young Paul rushed out to unsaddle me.

5 "Father," he cried breathlessly. "The *Dartmouth* is here. She came in this afternoon, loaded with tea. Mr. Sam Adams has been looking for you. Everybody's down at Griffin's Wharf. May I go down, Father?"

"Yes," Mr. Revere answered absently, "but be careful. This means trouble." Young Paul dashed off, Mr. Revere mounted again, and we trotted down to Griffin's Wharf.

10 The whole town seemed to be gathered there. I could see, and hear, Sam Adams mounted on a molasses barrel making a speech. Around him were all the prominent Patriots: Dr. Warren, James Otis, Sam's cousin John Adams, Mr. Hancock. The leading members of the Sons of Liberty and the Committee of Correspondence were there as well as every well-known judge, minister, banker, lawyer and merchant. All, that is, except the Loyalists, who were noticeably absent.

15 As we worked our way slowly through the throng the Captain of the *Dartmouth* was arguing with Mr. Hancock. "No tea goes ashore," Mr. Hancock said firmly. "Not one ounce."

"Go back to England," the crowd roared. "Go back to England and take your rotten tea with you!"

20 "Listen, Mr. Hancock," the Captain pleaded, "I don't care tuppence about the blasted tea or the blasted tax or the blasted King or his blasted Ministers. I'm a good Nantucketer, I am. All I'm talking about are my ship and my crew. These men haven't been ashore for six weeks and they're getting ugly. Hang the tea, I'm sick and tired of the stuff!"

25 After a few moments of consultation Mr. Hancock told the Captain: "Your ship will be unharmed; the Sons of Liberty guarantee its safety. As for your men, they are at perfect liberty to come ashore—but see that they bring no tea with them, not a pocketful. And the longer they stay ashore the better for all concerned."

At this announcement the crew broke into a cheer and came piling ashore, each man with a grin turning out his pockets to show that he bore none of the hated tea.

30 The Sons of Liberty took charge at once. Twenty-five muskets were dealt out to twenty-five men who were to act as guards, Mr. Revere one of them. The guards pushed the crowd back five paces from the ship's side and began pacing their posts as smartly as any King's sentries. The relieved Captain brought out a rocking chair and settled himself on the poop deck with his pipe and the ship's cat. Slowly the crowd melted away, leaving  
35 only a small group of the Patriot leaders and the pacing sentries. Young Paul rode me home; fed, watered and bedded me down. As he stumbled sleepily into the house all the meetinghouse bells struck three.

Mr. Revere came home a little after sunrise when the guard was changed. He slumped down wearily while Mrs. Revere, Deborah and the old lady bustled about, getting him a  
40 good hot breakfast. He had not eaten since noon of the previous day.

"Paul dear," old Mrs. Revere asked, "did you bring your mother just a little bit of that lovely English tea?"

"No, Mother, of course not. Not an ounce of that tea was unloaded or ever will be, in America."

45 "But I *must* have tea," the old lady wailed. "Seems to me you could have brought your poor old mother just a tiny scrap of tea."

"But Mother, you have your smuggled Dutch tea."

"Nasty old dried-up stuff," she cried, "and *so* expensive! This would be much cheaper even with the tax. I don't see why you men have to be *so* stubborn about a little old tax  
50 and me practically dying for a cup of really good tea."

"But Mother, I've explained and explained. It's a matter of principle, it's not the cost. England has not the right to tax us even one penny without our say-so. If we—"

At this moment the door crashed open and Sam Adams burst in. "To horse my boy, to horse," he shouted excitedly. "Word has just come that these minions of Tyranny<sup>1</sup> may  
55 attempt to land the cursed Bohea<sup>2</sup> at some other port. Every town on our coast must be warned. Five messengers have already left; you are the sixth. You will go to Marblehead and Salem and rouse the Sons of Liberty there. Order them to warn Gloucester, Newburyport, Portsmouth!"

"But my breakfast . . ." poor Mr. Revere protested.

60 "No time for breakfast, when duty calls," Sam cried. "I'll take care of that."

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<sup>1</sup>**minions of Tyranny:** Sam Adams is referring to the British

Young Paul had me already saddled. As Mr. Revere wearily mounted, I caught a glimpse of Sam Adams seating himself in Mr. Revere's vacant chair and contemplating with approval the steaming dishes spread before him. The last thing we heard as we headed out of the stable into a driving cold drizzle was the voice of old Mrs. Revere.

65        "Now surely, Mr. Adams," she was saying, "with your high position and great influence, surely you could manage to get a poor old Grandmother just a pound or so of that delicious tea?"

70        It was a miserable cold wet ride to Marblehead and Salem, the longest we had yet taken. In Salem I was fed and watered, while the Sons of Liberty rushed Mr. Revere off to consult with their leaders. I did hope they gave the poor man a decent meal, for he had now been twenty-four hours without food. However, I had barely finished my oats when he reappeared, mounted (with considerable groaning), and we set out on the long trip home.

75        As Mr. Revere stumbled wearily into the kitchen Mrs. Revere cried, "My poor Paul, do sit down and get a rest, supper will be ready in a moment. I hope they gave you a good dinner in Salem."

80        "Codfish," Mr. Revere answered sadly. "And Deborah, my girl, will you please fetch a pillow for my chair?" He sank onto the pillow with a groan of relief and within a few moments was enjoying his hot supper. But before he was half through his clam chowder there was a knock at the door and again Sam Adams entered. "My tea?" exclaimed old Mrs. Revere.

      "Not yet, Madame," Sam answered, "but I have the matter under advisement. Come, Paul, my boy, time for changing the guard."

85        With another slight groan Mr. Revere rose stiffly from his half finished meal, and donned his greatcoat; and the two set off for Griffin's Wharf.

90        For the next two weeks there was no peace in the Revere home, in fact in all Boston. Very soon two more tea-laden vessels, the *Eleanor* and the *Beaver*, arrived and were also moored at Griffin's Wharf. Mr. Revere was on the guard over the tea ships every night. All day he was here, there and everywhere; at meetings of the Sons of Liberty, of the Caucus Club, at mass meetings in the Old North Church, riding on business for the various committees. He had no time for his shop; when he slept I cannot imagine, and he almost never was allowed to finish a meal without interruption.